

Chairman's Summary - Representative Bert Stevenson
Mountain Home Working Group
December 6, 2004

At its December meeting, the Mountain Home Working Group briefly discussed the outcome of a meeting with representatives from the Mountain Home Air Force Base, received an update on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and adopted its final report to the Expanded Natural Resources Interim Committee.

This is expected to be the working group's final meeting. Members of the working group expressed appreciation for the support they received from various stakeholders, public entities, Department of Idaho Water Resources, and others.

Mountain Home Air Force Base: Mountain Home Air Force Base cannot be involved in the water issues until the ongoing Base Realignment Committee (BRAC) process is completed. Several water conservation and monitoring projects are underway. The base is willing to cooperate in any way it can with IDWR to share information and has been in contact with them already. With monitoring wells in place in this area, money designated for additional wells may be spent on wells in other areas.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program: CREP appears to becoming a major piece of the final solution to issues on the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer. While most eligible acres will be concentrated on the plain, there are provisions for areas where designated critical ground water management areas and ground water management areas are located, including the two in Elmore County. Updated information relating to the draft proposal, eligibility criteria, the ranking sheet, and a time line for implementing the program were presented. A final draft is expected to be presented to the legislature by January 2005. If approved by March 30th, the Governor will support the program if state funding issues are resolved, and could forward a letter proposing the program to the United States Secretary of Agriculture by June. The proposal could be adopted by late summer with enrollment beginning in the fall of 2005 and the program being implemented in the 2006 planting year.

Mountain Home Working Group Draft Report: Revisions to the working group's draft final report were reviewed and approved. One final addition was inserted on page 3 under Recommendations.

Recommendations: 1. Mountain Home Ground Water Advisory Committee. Sentence 2.
"The Working Group recommends that the committee complete and submit to IDWR a recommended management plan within 180 days starting on January 1, 2005."

Once the last revision is incorporated, the final report will be forwarded to Legislative Services Office. An official copy of the report with a cover letter will be sent to the City of Mountain Home, Elmore County commissioners, and the Mountain Home Air Force Base.